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THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHITECTURE IN CALIFORNIA

FROM A PAINTER'S POINT OF VIEW

BY J. CARROLL BECKWITH



Photo by P. I. Brown

GARDENS OF GILLESPIE
RESIDENCE: TERMINAL
FIGURE

THE only State of our Union which has legitimately inherited a style of architecture is California. On the Eastern seaboard the Colonial adaptations are expressions of American taste and originality, grafted upon the Georgian period, an epochal transition that has to do with our revolutionary thought and as such is a part of the history of our development as a nation. But the "Mission" style, as it is called on the Western slope, is a distinct transplantation from Mexico, where it had already gone

through various local adaptations and is exactly as the Mexican builders had it from the Hispano-Mauresque examples which came over some time after Cortez. We are familiar today from pictures with this dignified architectural type. Its preservation and continuance in California is imperative, not alone because of its beauty and its appropriateness to the *topography* of the land and to the tree formations, but through respect for its significance in history.

Heaven has been more than bountiful to that much-blessed strip of land lying between the moun-

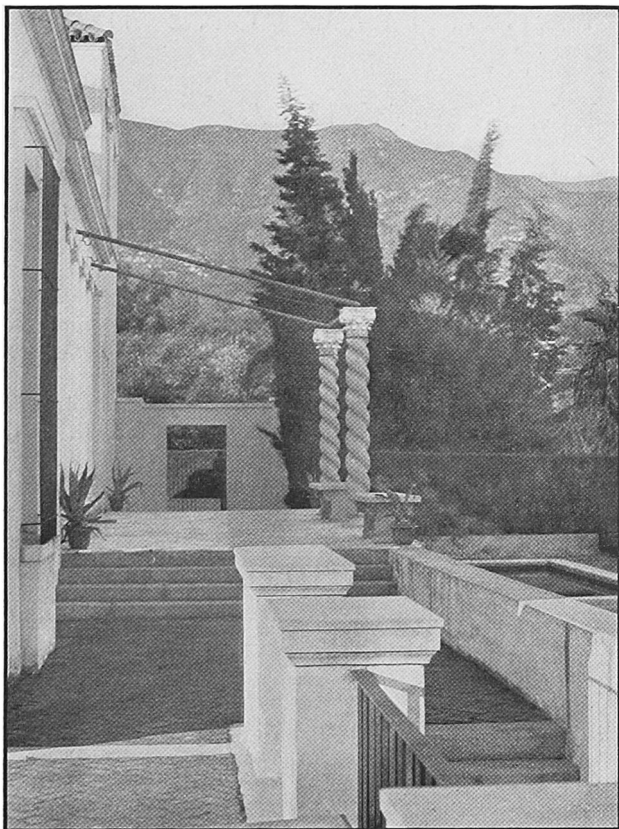
tains and the Pacific Ocean along the western border of the vast State of California. It is a question whether an overgenerous Providence develops what is best in men. Were not the hardships which encompassed our ancestors of the seventeenth century good for the race? What we see in the earliest settlers who wandered up the western coast from Mexico is the spirit of the Fathers of the Church, who brought religious and Christian civilization to the Indians. It was a spirit of sacrifice and of unselfish pursuance of duty—of an ideal. No dominating desire for wealth, for control of land. The monuments they have left are examples to the lesser moral invasion which followed, a lasting reproach to our own people from the East. Today the pleasure-seeking tourist from the window of his ugly hostelry, his rattling tin sleeping-car or his shingled bungalow, looks with deference and awe at the dignity, at the taste which guided the graceful lines of the old Mission architecture and at the skill which invested the planning of their reservoirs and aqueducts.

Architecturally California is today like most of our country, a land of experiment. The best training and talent have been at the command of the recently acquired millions which are disporting themselves in this rich pasture-land. But the wilfulness of the newly created Mæcenæ only wants the freedom of expression of his personality and will not easily brook guidance. Authority he casts aside and precedent he does not respect. Intelligence and skill of the highest character have been shown in

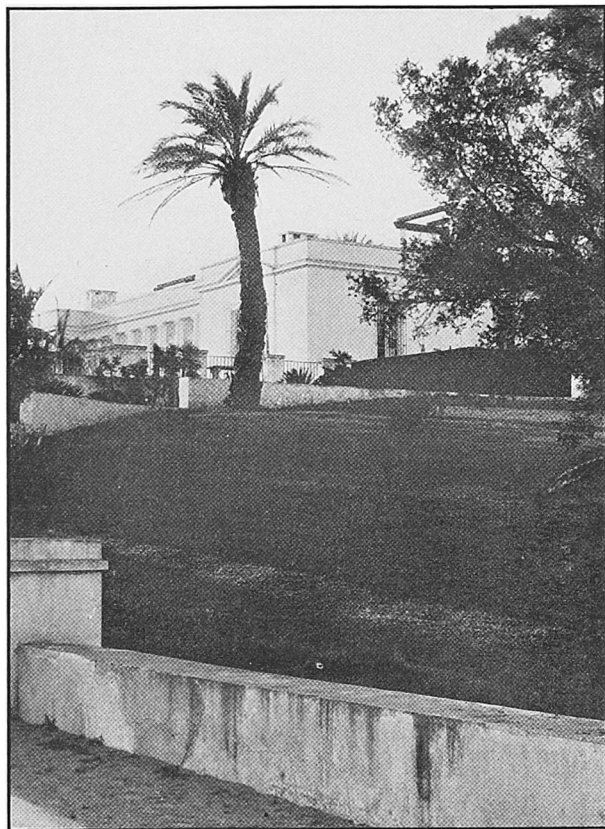


Gillespie
Residence

Santa
Barbara,
California



GILLESPIE RESIDENCE: TERRACE

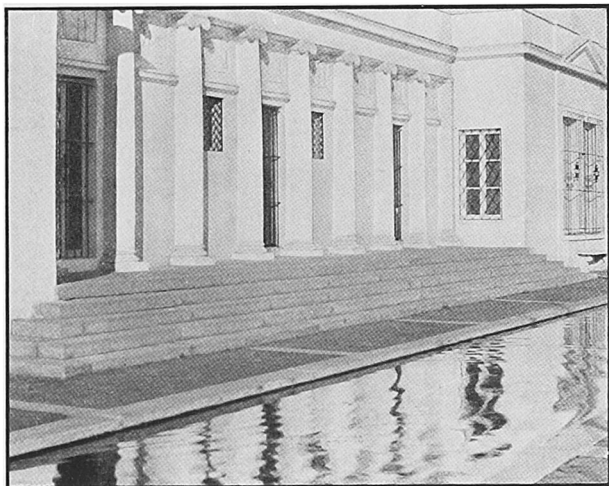


GILLESPIE RESIDENCE: ASCENDING THE DRIVE

the San Diego Exposition, but—save in the display of agricultural machinery or the exploiting of the farming resources of California or Western Canada—has the example been profitable to the natives of this region? Are we to any degree susceptible to the absorption of beauty? Does it enter our minds as a cultural element whose results may be shown in our product later? No exposition has ever been held where a more concrete and perfect reproduction of a period or a style has been so ably set forth as in this one at San Diego, and it is profoundly regrettable that it should disintegrate and finally have to be removed. Its record in photograph and picture will, however, be treasured by all who would see the graceful lines continue both in public building and private residence along the verge of the Pacific.

Probably Santa Barbara thus far is the place

where are gathered the greatest number of dwellings representative of taste and refinement—not because there is greater wealth than at Pasadena or a number of other places, but because there is more scholarly culture, more pride in creating what is



GILLESPIE RESIDENCE: FACADE AND POOL

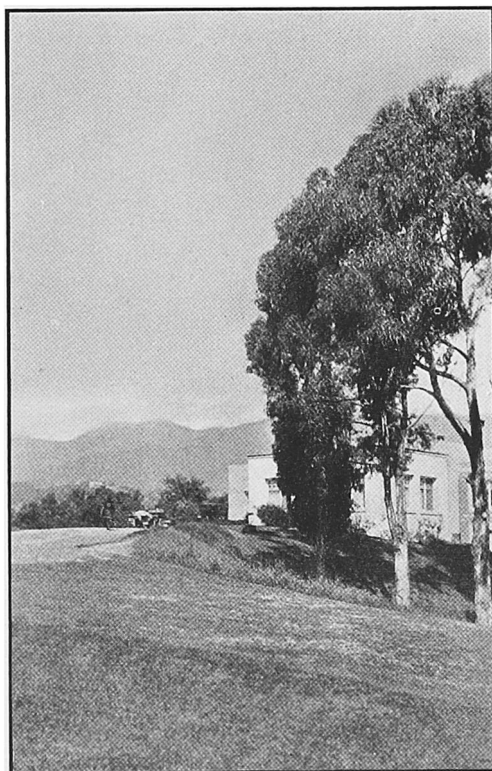
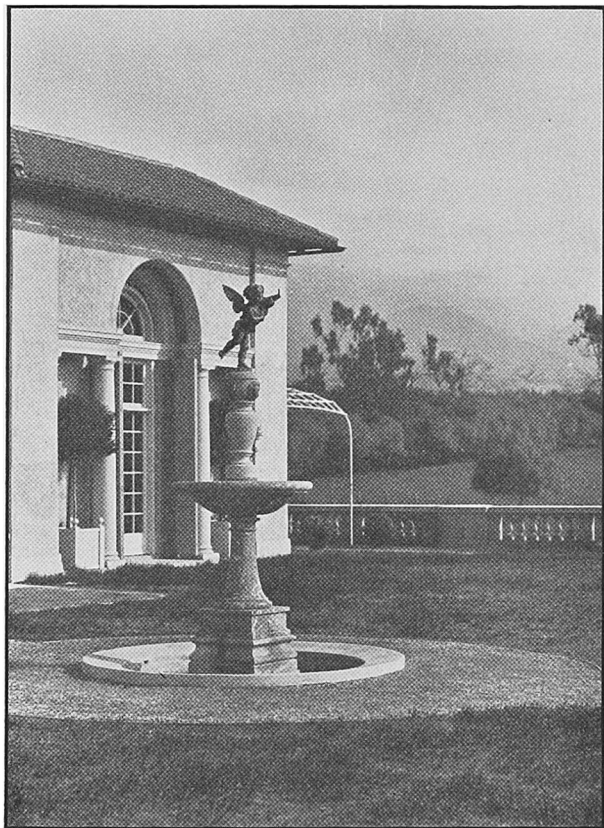


Photo by P. I. Brown
COUNTRY CLUB AT SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA



FOUNTAIN ON TERRACE OF ISHAM RESIDENCE:
A REPRODUCTION IN BRONZE OF VERROCHIO'S "CUPID WITH FISII"



THE *Cortile*, REMINISCENT OF POMPEII IN
ISHAM RESIDENCE

harmonious with nature, as examples have shown to the *understanding* people who have traveled. Pre-eminent among them is the picturesque Gillespie residence, where a tasteful combination of motifs from the southern border of the Mediterranean with those of Spain, both in the structure and in the adjacent gardens and fountains, renders the place a happy hunting-ground abounding in effects and

impressions that awaken joy and give compensation to the mind of the tourist who is beset with the banalities and commercialism of our vast continent.

Placed at the top of a low-lying hill, this is a place where one feels the joy the owner has had in creating it. Memories of Tangiers, of the Alhambra, of Greece are awakened as one ascends from the graceful lines of the wrought-iron gate. Here water and

RESIDENCE OF
MR. RALPH
ISHAM,
SANTA
BARBARA,
CALIFORNIA,
RECENTLY
COMPLETED



PURELY
ITALIAN IN
CHARACTER.
A GRACEFUL
CAMPANILE
CONCEALS
THE
WATER
TOWER

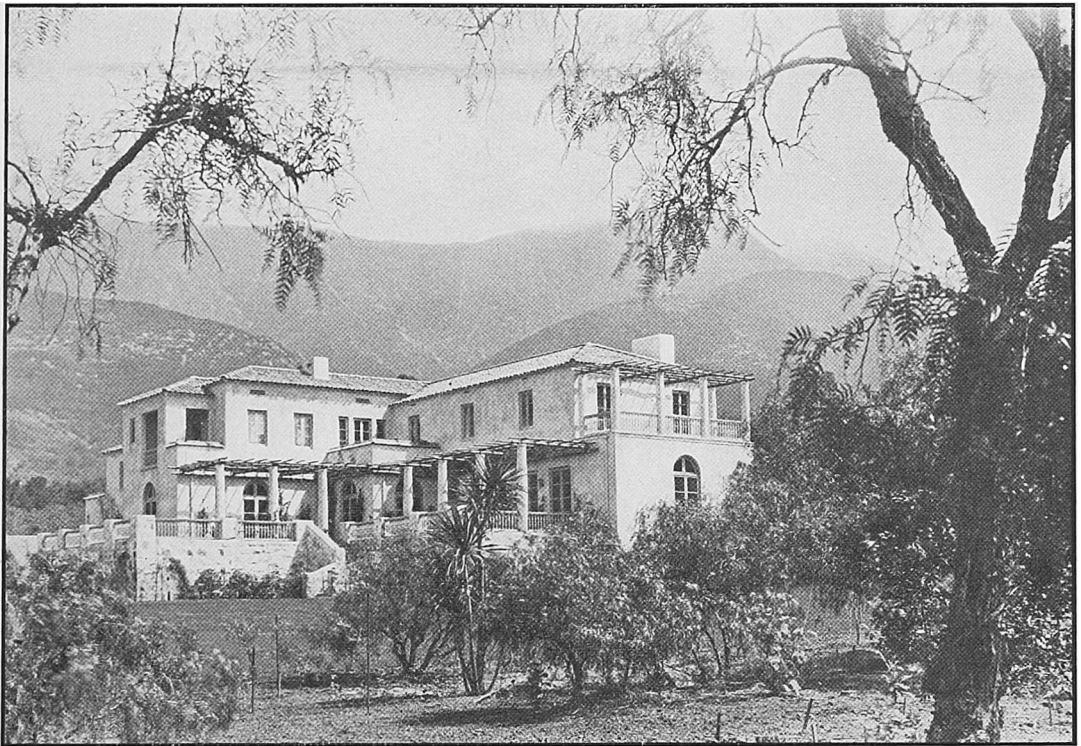


Photo by A. R. Edmonson

RESIDENCE OF MR. REGINALD RIVES, MONTECITO, CALIFORNIA

fountains and rivulets have been placed and adapted for both sound and reflection, mirroring the white walls and classic details of the architecture. Thanks to the generous thought of the owner, the public is permitted to wander freely through the grounds and no signs suggest that one is an intruder.

Numbers of other homes are detected among the beautiful forms of the eucalyptus trees and the live oak. Those in white or tinted plaster with red-tiled roofs add immeasurably to the perfection of the civilized landscape. The home of Mr. Ralph Isham, where happily the unsightly railroad water tanks, against which this progressive Art Magazine has made such noble warfare, are concealed within a graceful campanilé. This residence is one of the typical instances of the educated taste of the owner. It is purely Italian in character and when the patina of time has cast its tonal influence over the graceful lines, it will add to the beauties of Santa Barbara's most attractive suburb at Montecito. I introduce three photographs of this lovely place, the second showing the *cortilé*, reminiscent of Pompeii, where the sunlight plays upon the central fountain. In time, no doubt, running curtains will span the roof of this *patio*, although—and here is one of the problems of this California country—the heat is rarely strong enough to justify a *tendido*, or even an umbrella. In the third photograph we have the fountain on the terrace, which is the bronze reproduction of Verrochio's "Cupid with Fish."

Also the Roman Campagna form of the new residence of Mr. Reginald Rives at Montecito. In the background are seen the mountains, which begin but a mile or two back from the beach and rise sometimes to four thousand feet, the limestone rock showing gray and white against the dark green. In the foreground are the pepper trees, of which the

delicate light leaves are made more tender by the dark cadmium of the peppers. Here we have a house with its vines as yet ungrown over the pergola; but, with its red-tile roof and pearl-gray cement walls set off by the French green of the window and door casings, the whole relieved against the rich background of mountains, it makes indeed a lovely picture.

Numberless gardens and arrangements of plant life are visible in this prodigiously responsive land, where the roses clamber up to the third and fourth story of a façade.

California I found in no way a tropical country and the sunlight is rather to be courted than avoided; hence the deep overhang of the roof of timber is inappropriate.

Mrs. Frederic Gould, whose well-placed dwelling has an outlook from a height over the sandy beach and broad bosom of the Pacific, with its line of protecting kelp, is surrounded with a garden of a personal character; her friends call it a "Garden of Smells." These delightful odors fill the land and are not dependent upon flowers. The spicy woods, the leaves of the *Eucalyptus citrodorus*, the Pettisporam and a myriad other trees and bushes bathe the land with odors which the traveler bears away in his memory.

The open-air theatre at the Bothin Place is one of the most perfect in the world and the people of Santa Barbara have good reason to be proud of it. It is one of the most convincing evidences of what may be accomplished out of their wonderful soil in tree-growth when intelligence is behind the hand of the gardener. There are several in Italy and in England. I regret very much not having a photograph of it to introduce.

J. Carroll Peckwith